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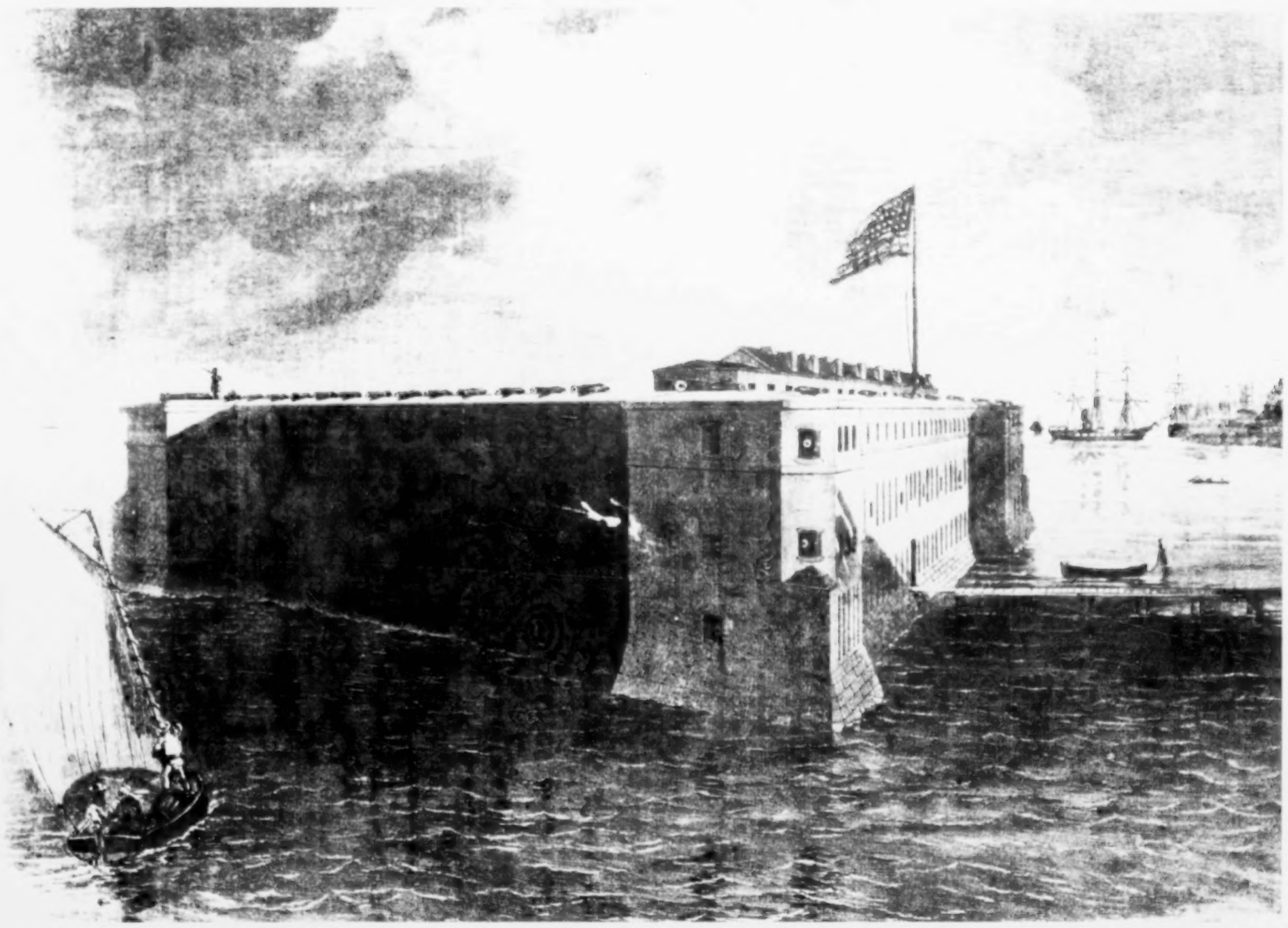
LANDMARKS AT RISK



Fort Taylor guarded Key West Harbor and Naval Base for over 100 years. It represents the evolution of a seacoast fortification through three periods of change. Photo: courtesy, Fort Zachary Taylor State Historic Site.

Landmarks at Risk

Operated by the State of Florida since 1976, the 87-acre Fort Zachary Taylor State Historic Site is open to the public. Between the end of World War II and 1976, the fort was under-utilized as a storage facility by the Navy. Many years of low maintenance and exposure to coastal storms have contributed to its overall deterioration. As a result, major structural problems threaten the fort and create serious life safety concerns for public use.

The fort's most critical problems are evident in the Endicott Period Battery Osceola and the barracks building. Deterioration of the battery is attributed to an improper concrete application, lack of expansion joints, and settlement. The sallyport ceiling of the 1840s barracks is in imminent danger of collapse. Finally, a considerable amount of archeological material, including potentially live ammunition, is being discovered along the fort's boundaries and in casemates filled during the 1890s Endicott construction. Artifacts should be treated and stored; live ammunition should be properly discarded.

Recommended Work/Costs

Data was taken from a National Park Service report, "National Historic Landmark Condition Assessment Report: Fort Zachary Taylor," prepared by the Southeast Office in Atlanta, Georgia. The site inspection team consisted of Richard Ramsden and Tom Hensley, historical architects; Paul Hawke, historian; Mark Barnes, archeologist; and Edward Bowman, engineer. Exterior work was deemed the top priority at an estimated $709,836. Most of that is to correct extremely serious structural problems. First, the partially excavated casemates abutting the batteries need to be stabilized by filling them with dry sand ($143,040). Other critical work to reverse the cumulative effects of weathering on both structural concrete and cast-iron features will cost $32,700. The single most costly exterior work item is re-roofing of the historic barracks ($355,800). Another problem is corrosion of the iron embedded in the barrack's walls, which is causing masonry delamination; the iron should be removed and the masonry units replaced and repointed ($70,200). The exterior should be repointed, missing bricks replaced, and portions of the stucco restored ($55,000). Considered minor work, $9,588 should be spent to remove lime deposits from the foundation walls.

The interior is also seriously threatened by deterioration — almost $325,000 needs to be spent to repair the deteriorating concrete walls and corroding iron elements. Of very low cost, but high priority, are items for life safety such as emergency exit signs, code-required handrails, and a wall mounted fire extinguisher ($930). Another $7,000 should be spent to provide barrier-free access to the museum, parade, and restroom facilities, and for handicapped parking. Finally, the pedestrian walkway is uneven and needs repair ($2,514).

Critical archeological work includes surveying unexcavated casemates to determine if they contain potentially live ammunition ($15,000) and, if so, to draft procedures for its removal ($1,000). Original artillery tubes should be moved into a lower casemate to prevent further deterioration ($20,000). Total estimated costs for the fort are over $1,000,000. The detailed assessment report is available from National Park Service offices (see **HOW YOU CAN HELP**, over).

Structural problems in Battery Osceola, such as severe cracking of the concrete slab shown here, could eventually cause its collapse. Replacing failed concrete and filling the rooms with dry sand to add structural stability have been recommended. Photo: Paul H. Hawke.

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LANDMARKS AT RISK

HOW YOU CAN HELP

Donate to a Landmark in your area.

First, for information on how you can help Fort Zachary Taylor in Key West, Florida, contact the following organizations:

National Park Service

Southeast Regional Office
75 Spring Street, Suite 1150
Atlanta, GA 30303
(404)331-2632

State Historic Preservation Office

Archives, History & Records
Department of State
The Capitol
Tallahassee, FL 32304
(904)487-2333

Local Preservation Group

Historic Florida Keys
Preservation Board
500 Whitehead Street
Key West, FL 33041
(305)292-6718

Owner Contact

John Scafidi
Florida Department of
Natural Resources
Division of Recreation and Parks
3900 Commonwealth Boulevard
Tallahassee, FL 32379
(904)488-4892

Jeff Dimaggio, Superintendent
Fort Zachary Taylor
State Historic Site
P.O. Box 289
Key West, FL 33040
(305)292-6713

Support the Landmark Fund

Second, you can assist National Historic Landmarks by donating money or building materials through the National Park Foundation, a charitable, non-profit organization chartered by Congress in 1967, in part, to further conservation of historic and educational resources for future generations of Americans by accepting and administering gifts. Among the various activities of the Park Foundation is administration of the National Historic Landmark Fund. This fund has been set up to assist endangered Landmarks nationwide by making possible tax deductible materials and cash donations by individuals, organizations, or companies.

Donations may be used to support threatened Landmarks in general or a Landmark of the donor's choice. Donors may select a Landmark to assist based on its location or associations with specific historic themes, events, or individuals; its architectural style; its building type; or its construction material. Landmarks in need of various services or building products which correspond to a donor's business can also be selected. The National Park Foundation gives priority to those Landmarks in which critical needs have been identified through professional evaluation and planning sponsored by the National Park Service.

For additional information on Landmarks, or to find out how you can help Landmarks at Risk by donating to the National Historic Landmark Fund, please contact:

Landmarks at Risk

Preservation Assistance Division
Attn: NHL Assistance
P.O. Box 37127
Washington, DC 20013-7127
(202)343-9578

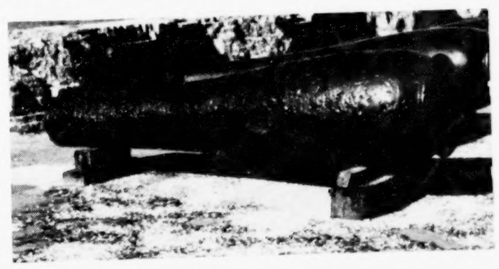
Landmarks at Risk are executive summaries of Landmark Condition Assessment Reports undertaken by the National Park Service as part of its technical assistance activities to help and preserve National Historic Landmarks, those resources designated by the Secretary of the Interior as possessing "exceptional value in America's history."

FORT ZACHARY TAYLOR
Key West, Florida

For 145 years, Fort Zachary Taylor has stood as the bastion of south Florida, defending the harbor of Key West. Although the fort was never attacked or surrendered, it saw service as an Army installation from 1845 through World War II. During the American Civil War, Fort Zachary Taylor was one of four Union forts in Confederate territory which did not fall into Southern hands. Over a quarter century later, the fort played a significant role during the Spanish-American War by protecting the Key West Naval Base, port of embarkation for the Great White Fleet.

The defensive role of the Fort diminished after the Spanish-American War. During World War I, it served a headquarters for the Seventh Naval District. During World War II, anti-aircraft guns were installed to address the new threat of air attack. By the end of the war, the need for Fort Zachary Taylor to defend Key West had passed. Today, the fort is a park — operated by the State of Florida — that tells a dramatic story of the evolution of seacoast fortification at Key West during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. for its exceptional value in American history Fort Zachary Taylor was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1973 by the Secretary of the Interior.

Unfortunately, at this date, many of the fort's significant features are being jeopardized by serious deterioration problems.



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